

October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The goal of awareness month is to increase both knowledge and awareness of one of the most prevalent cancers in our country, breast cancer. One out of every seven women is afflicted by the disease, and Connecticut has the third highest rate of new breast cancer cases in the country.

In my hometown of East Hartford, and throughout the state of Connecticut, individuals and organizations are using this month to raise awareness and take part in the fight against breast cancer.

On Thursday October 1<sup>st</sup>, the [Pink Heals Tour](#) and its [pink fire trucks rolled into East Hartford](#) as hundreds of people, including East Hartford Fire Fighters, welcomed their national effort to fight breast cancer.

The tour, which started in September of 2007, has traveled across the country to raise awareness and support to combat breast cancer, specifically targeting male dominated professions. As [Dave Graybill](#), a firefighter from Arizona and founder of the tour, has said “we are caring for, supporting, and loving the most important people in our lives, the women of our communities.”

This event was especially meaningful for me, the East Hartford Fire Department and the community, as it honored a member of the Fire Department’s family. 14 year veteran Firefighter [Judy Geier](#), a mother of five, was recently diagnosed with breast cancer in July and is currently undergoing chemotherapy.

The Fire Department has rallied around their colleague to provide support and encouragement to Judy and her family during this trying time. After learning about the Pink Heals effort, EHFD, through the leadership of Fire Chief John Oates, worked tirelessly to have the tour change its originally planned schedule, and make a surprise stop in East Hartford. After hearing about Judy, Dave Graybill, happily agreed to add another stop to the tour’s schedule.

Members of my district office including my office’s Ombudsman, former [State Senator Billy Ciotto](#) who presented

on my behalf a letter and congressional citation to Dave, attended the event. Throughout the day visitors, including

[Judy](#)

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added their messages of support for family members, friends, and colleagues afflicted with the disease on to the fire trucks.

[The pink fire trucks](#)

are filled with thousands of heartfelt messages from the tour's previous stops.

America has made significant strides in reducing the mortality rate due to breast cancer through early detection, mammograms, and prevention services. However, with 40,000 women dying every year from this disease, we have much more work to be done.

With greater funding, increased awareness nationwide, and community support, as displayed by the firefighters and residents in East Hartford and honorable individuals like Dave Graybill, we can all come together and succeed in this fight.